



St. Raphael's Church

Catholic Parish Church & Parish Priest - Fr. Michael Lovell

Chaplaincy to Kingston University

Tel 020 8616 9583 Email michaellovell@rcaos.org.uk

Parish Office - (Mon. - Fri. 9.00am - 4.00pm)

St. Raphael's Church, Portsmouth Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey, KT1 - 2NA

Church Manager Tel 020 8541 - 4999

Email surbiton@rcaos.org.uk Web. www.straphaelsurbiton.org.uk

Sunday 3rd January - 2nd Sunday after Christmas (B)

9.30am	Francesca Poulter and the Berni & Martin Family
11.30am	Martin Paes & Family
5.00pm	Missa Pro Populo

Mon. 4 th January	Christmas Feria
10.00am	Edna Balinska RIP
Tue. 5 th January	Christmas Feria
10.00am	Simone Freeman



Wed. 6th January - The Epiphany of The Lord 12.00noon Judy Law

Thu. 7 th January	Christmas Feria
10.00am	J J & Helene O'Sullivan
Fri. 8 th January	Christmas Feria
10.00am	The Pringle Family
(A day of abstinence when Catholics should abstain from eating meat)	
Sat. 9 th January	Christmas Feria
10.00am	The Keehn Family

Sunday 10th January - The Baptism of The Lord (B)

9.30am	Mary Cooke
11.30am	Christine Bou-Saleh and family
5.00pm	Missa Pro Populo

FR. MICHAEL WRITES

Happy New Year - to everyone in the parish.

As we stand at the gate of the New Year, we go forward with Jesus into the future. He remains our sure foundation, whatever the challenges that lie ahead.

A special Thank You to all who helped with the Christmas Masses - especially the Readers, Sacristans and Stewards, Instrumentalists and Singers from the Choir, Cleaners and Flower Arrangers. All who attended and participated in the Masses have overcome the Covid restrictions to make this a special time.

Thank you, also, for your beautiful Christmas cards and your kind gifts.

CHRISTMAS OFFERINGS

Your offerings made at Christmas are your personal gift to the Parish Priest. There are Christmas Offering envelopes available at the back of the church. However, if you are a member of the Gift Aid Scheme and use weekly envelopes, please use the special Christmas Offering Envelope in your packet. This year because of the covid restrictions, His Grace the Archbishop has decided that all collections taken between Christmas Eve and up to and including the Epiphany will be taken as your offering. Thank you for your generosity.

A LETTER OF THANKS FROM FR. PETER SEBASTIAN

"I want to thank you, Fr. Michael, and all my dear St. Raphael's parishioners for your most beautiful ordination gift - a stunning Marian chasuble which I will wear with love and fond recollection when I offer Mass on feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary. I hope one day soon I might wear it when offering Mass at St. Raphael's. Special thanks to Michael Pearce, our Church Manager, who arranged for its manufacture. It is of excellent quality with a lovely pattern. You will be pleased to know that I find priesthood a pure joy and that I have been welcomed most warmly by priests and parishioners at St Mary's, West Croydon. But of course St. Raphael's has a special place in my heart. Thank you again for your generosity. I will offer Mass for your health and wellbeing. A very blessed Epiphany and New Year to you all."

HOSPITAL -

If you, or a member of your family, are admitted to Kingston Hospital you need to inform ward staff that you are a Roman Catholic and would like to see the Catholic Chaplain. If you are calling on behalf of someone in the hospital, please call the hospital main switchboard - 0208 546 7711. The Switchboard will contact the Roman Catholic Chaplain. If you need the Sacrament of the Sick at home, please speak to Fr. Michael.

THE PARISH OFFICE

The parish office is open Monday – Thursday.

CONFESSIONS

Confessions can be heard on request but will normally take place in the church grounds.

MARRIAGES, BAPTISMS AND FUNERALS

Please email Fr. Michael for details michaellovell@rcaos.org.uk



St. Joseph's Our Catholic Primary and Nursery School

The Fairfield, Kingston Upon Thames, KT1 2UP. Tel. 020 8546 7178

E.mail office@stjosephs.rbksch.org Web.

www.stjosephs.kingston.sch.uk

Boys & Girls Aged 3-11. Breakfast Club & After School Club.

Head teacher – Mrs Sarah Keefe

Rated Good by Ofsted



*Wise men still
seek Him!*

On Wednesday, we celebrate the Epiphany of the Lord and we are reminded that the Son of God came for all people, Jew and Gentile alike. His saving love is available to everyone, everywhere, in whatever state of life they may find themselves. There is no one outside of God's thirst for love.

In the gospel we are presented with a contrast between three figures: Jesus, Herod and the Magi who search the night for the focal point of a star's light, the new-born king of the Jews. Herod stands in between, not as a bridge but as an obstruction whose evil intent is to destroy the Child the Magi seek. He represents the opposite of the divine mission of Jesus as well as the goal the Magi have in mind in seeking out the Son of God made man.

In comparing and contrasting these three figures we can learn an important lesson about how to live our life.

What was Jesus about? Why did the Son of God appear in time? Why did the Son of God become man? The Catechism explains that the "Word became flesh for us in order to save us by reconciling us with God". "The Word became flesh so that thus we might know God's love". "The Word became flesh to be our model of holiness". "The Word became flesh to make us partakers of the divine nature . . . so that we might become sons and daughters of God". St. John in his gospel writes "The Word became flesh out of boundless love for humanity that we may have life and have it abundantly".

Herod, on the other hand, displayed by his actions something of an entirely different sort. When we think of Herod, we think of tyrants who left terrifying scars on human history - men such as Stalin, Hitler, Mao Tse-tung to name only a few. King Herod was part of a non-Jewish (Edomite) family that held political favour with Rome. He was disturbed by the star that the Magi followed because it recalled an Old Testament prophecy about the Messiah. In the book of Numbers we read: "A star shall come forth out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel." Herod was troubled by this prophecy, since he was an Edomite and knew the same book also foretold disaster for his family: "Edom shall be dispossessed". Herod's unrelenting fear was the loss of his power. That a new-born king had been born was an intolerable threat. With typical worldly manoeuvring, he seeks to stamp out Jesus and secure his position by ordering the death of the Holy Innocents. However, Jesus was not the least interested in temporal thrones, worldly power or amassing perishable riches. He has no wish to take anything from Herod, on the contrary, Jesus wants to give something to Herod, something Herod cannot possibly win in any political power play. Jesus came to give Himself and therefore His kingdom to others but this is a type of kingdom Herod apparently could not fathom. This kingdom is not of the world. It cannot be taken by force, coercion or political intrigue. Herod is infamous for his ruthlessness and single-minded devotion to wiping out his enemies, whether friends or family or anyone else who threatened his throne, even his own wife and three of his sons.

The Magi were astrologers who were interested in an extraordinary star that appeared shining over the location of the infant king of the Jews. However, it was not merely the star that caught their eye, for someone had first caught their hearts. While Herod was murderously holding on, the Magi were wisely letting go. They were watching and waiting not with intent to murder, but intent on finding new hope and new life. They were surveying the night sky not to insulate themselves but to open themselves to the Divine Other who is Himself the source of life. They were looking not merely for a sign from God but for Christ himself, who is the Word made flesh and the perfect image of the Father. Moved by the promise of what they perceived in the heavens, they left their country behind in search of this.

Herod is looking for the wrong things, searching in the wrong places, destroying to shore-up his political position, conspiring to annihilate perceived opponents but the Magi take the humble, submissive and wise approach. They seek what is right, true and beautiful. They journey in search of the good, the wondrous, the ultimate. They head out into the dangerous night, risking their lives in search of Divine Light. The star they saw was a sign for all people. It is high and in full view. Its light shines down upon Jesus, who came to heal, elevate and restore humanity. The light of Christ, represented by the star over Bethlehem, illuminates the mystery of man, points the way and reveals the path to salvation and eternal life.

It's important to ask ourselves, "What type of journey are we on? Who or what do we pursue? What are we willing to leave behind? What are we willing to risk to find God?" Are we surveying the night sky to gain power, or to survive in a fallen world, or to live forever in eternal communion with God, held securely in his loving embrace? Perhaps you once sought but no longer do. Perhaps the lure of the world has deflected you from the journey to Christ and forced you off course by your own consent toward the path of darkness. Perhaps your vision has become clouded. If so, turn to the new-born King, whose vision heals and clarifies and restores; turn to Christ whose love heals and gives sight to the blind, bringing light to those who before could not see.

After the Magi visited Jesus they are warned in a dream not to return to Herod and to return to their country by another way. An encounter with Jesus changes us forever. We might travel back to our country but it's no longer the familiar home. We might again inhabit old places but we no longer truly live there. Perhaps we go back to work, to school or to college, but we are different; things are different. The old self is left behind, the new self journeys onward into the new night devoid of darkness. The illumination of the Star guides our every step and movement; the way is no longer uncertain; we are no longer alone. Life is new. We have found an unwavering and certain security in the Light who is Jesus Christ who infinitely loves.

ST. RAPHAEL'S 2020 CRIB COLLECTION – THE MANNA SOCIETY

This year we will be donating our crib offerings to the Manna Society. The Manna Society is a Catholic charity, which has run the Manna Day Centre since 1982, supporting homeless people in the heart of London. For more information, please visit <https://www.mannasociety.org.uk/>. Please be as generous as you can.



Congratulations to Sonila -Victoria who was baptised recently at St. Raphael's. May the Lord continue the good work he has started.